

CLAIMS

1. A method for producing a pneumatic tire, comprising the steps of:
 - supporting both bead portions of a green tire by a pair of holders to which opposite axial ends of a bladder are tightly attached, respectively,
 - 5 - joining the holders to each other and supplying a fluid into the bladder to preliminarily inflate the bladder within the green tire, and
 - transferring the green tire into a vulcanizer, together with the holders and the preliminarily inflated bladder, and then supplying a heat medium into the bladder to thereby vulcanize the green tire and form a vulcanized tire.
- 10 2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the fluid to be supplied into the bladder for its preliminary inflation is a high-temperature fluid.
3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
 - transferring the vulcanized tire, together with the holders and the bladder, from the vulcanizer to a post-cure inflator, and attaching said holders to a rotary shaft of said post-cure inflator; and
 - 15 - rotating the rotary shaft of the post-cure inflator to thereby cool the vulcanized tire.
4. The method according to claim 3, further comprising the step of accelerating cooling of the vulcanized tire, by supplying a low-temperature fluid into the bladder.
- 20 5. An apparatus for producing a pneumatic tire, comprising:
 - a preprocessing machine comprised of (i) joining means for mutually joining a pair of holders supporting both bead portions of a green tire, respectively, and (ii) preliminary inflating means for supplying a fluid into a bladder having opposite axial ends tightly attached to the holders, respectively, to thereby preliminarily inflate the bladder within the green tire;
 - a vulcanizer for supplying a heat medium into the bladder within the green tire, to thereby vulcanize the green tire and form a vulcanized tire; and
 - 25 - transfer means for transferring the green tire together with said holders and the preliminarily inflated bladder, from the preprocessing machine to the vulcanizer.